

Remarks

This is in response to the final Office Action mailed on January 21, 2005. Claims 4, 5, 7, 13, and 17 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 12, and 16 are amended. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-3, 6, 8-12, 14-16, and 18-21 remain pending. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

I. Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In section 2 of the Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, and 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fleckenstein, U.S. Patent No. 3,482,125, in view of Okenfuss, U.S. Patent No. 1,991,622. In section 3, claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, and 14-16 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masaru, J.P. 01-231633, in view of Okenfuss. These rejections are respectfully traversed, and the correctness of these rejections is not conceded. The right to traverse these rejections in future prosecution is respectfully reserved.

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate allowable subject matter from claim 4. Claim 12 is amended to incorporate allowable subject matter from claim 13. Claim 16 is amended to incorporate allowable subject matter from claim 17. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 12, and 16, as well as claims 2, 4, 6, 14, and 15 that depend therefrom, are therefore respectfully requested.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

In section 4 of the Action, claims 8-11 and 18-21 were noted as being allowed. In section 5, claims 3, 5, 7, 13, and 17 were noted as being allowable. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's assistance in identifying allowable subject matter. All claims should be in condition for allowance.


III. Conclusion

The remarks set forth above provide certain arguments in support of the patentability of the pending claims. There may be other reasons that the pending claims are patentably distinct over the cited references, and the right to raise any such other reasons or arguments in the future is expressly reserved.

Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.
Please contact the undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,
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